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C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 002809

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/26/2009

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SUBJECT: GREEK FM PREVIEWS PM'S TRIP TO TURKEY, OTHER ISSUES

Classified By: Ambassador Charles P. Ries. Reasons 1.4(b/d)

1. (C) SUMMARY: In a tour d'horizon October 27, Greek Foreign Minister Molyviatis previewed for Ambassador the Prime Minister's proposed trip to Ankara in November, raised the latest public flap over the proposed purchase of 30 F-16s by Greece and promised to follow up on the status of the U.S.-EU MLAT protocol that Greece has not yet signed. Septels report the Balkans, BMENA/Foundation for the Future and Cyprus arms. END SUMMARY.

2. (C) Regarding press reports that Prime Minister Karamanlis will travel to Turkey, Molyviatis reported that:

-- Dates of November 24-25 are agreed in principle;
-- He has received assurances from Turkish FM Gul that Turkey will "keep things quiet" over the Aegean before and after the visit, and to keep fishing boats away from the disputed islet of Imia/Kardak (Molyviatis was embarrassed by both activities during his May visit to Turkey);
-- This will be a "goodwill" visit -- while the two PMs will "discuss everything, Molyviatis does not anticipate any agreements as a result (or during) the visit.

3. (C) Referring to several critical press reports concerning the sale of F-16s to Greece, Molyviatis assured Ambassador that the Greek Government was working to correct the record. (The basis for this articles was the difference between the low-ball cost estimate offered by MOD Spiliotopoulos in the early stages of the acquisition process and the high-end "not-to-exceed" estimate of USD 3.1 billion given in the Congressional notification and a DSCA press release.) While Molyviatis felt the MFA had been taken by surprise by the DSCA announcement of the parameters of the sale, he welcomed the news that the Embassy had previewed the process with the MOD and would be working closely with the Ministry of Defense to get the story straight.

4. (C) Ambassador asked Molyviatis whether it was possible to arrange for a signing of the U.S.-Greece bilateral protocol to the U.S.-EU MLAT and Extradition treaties. The protocol had been agreed in all details (and languages). Ambassador explained the protocol signing had been held up by the Minister of Justice who, wanting to stress the EU character of the protocol, preferred to sign together with another EU country, despite the fact that Ambassador had repeatedly made clear that the agreement need not be signed in a high-profile way. Further, Ambassador cautioned, most other EU countries had already signed. Molyviatis agreed to check details with his head of EU affairs (as will the Embassy) and to bring this matter to closure.

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RIES